




Advance Directives

An advance directive is a useful, legal way to document what you want in a medical emergency or if you get sick. There are two main elements to an advance directive: a living will and a durable power of attorney for health care. A living will provides specific health care instructions, like whether to use life support or pain relief medications and examples of life-prolonging treatments that still allow you to live a quality of life you can accept. A durable power of attorney for health care names a health care agent (or proxy) – someone you trust to speak for you about the medical care you do or do not want. You do not need a lawyer to complete an advance directive.

Preparing Your Advance Directive

-  Maryland law permits an advance directive to be in the form of a written or electronic document or a verbal statement made in a video recording. The Maryland Attorney General's Office has a website with information about advance directives, including an optional advance directive [form](#) with instructions that can be downloaded on a computer or printed. For more information, click [here](#).
-  An electronic advance directive eliminates the need to carry paper documents or create and re-create the document, particularly in a medical emergency. Several companies offer online services for creating a digital version of your advance directive or uploading your paper version. Electronic advance directives services can make it easier to update and share your advance directives. Some companies offer mobile apps (available through Apple and Google stores).
-  The Maryland Health Care Commission has recognized [MyDirectives](#) as an electronic advance directives service. As part of this recognition, MyDirectives must meet certain criteria for technical provisions and privacy and security. This includes making sure your electronic advance directive is made available to treating providers through the State-Designated Health Information Exchange (HIE), the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP). For more information, visit: <http://www.mydirectives.com>

There are other available resources when preparing your advance directive. You may want to consider:

[The National Institute of
Aging](#)

[American Bar Association
Tool Kit for Health Care
Advance Planning](#)